



For Immediate Release
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Blue Dogs Call for Balanced Budget

Alabama Representative Bobby Bright takes the lead in Blue Dog efforts to reduce the deficit

Washington, DC – Today, members of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition, led by **Representative Bobby Bright of Alabama**, will introduce legislation that would require the federal government to pay down the national debt and balance the budget by 2020. The Blue Dog “Balanced Budget Amendment” is a key component of the *Blue Dog Blueprint for Fiscal Reform*, a comprehensive plan to begin reducing the deficit, balance the budget and lay the groundwork for sound fiscal policies over the long term.

“Balancing the budget is a simple concept that Alabama families follow every day, but unfortunately the federal government doesn’t play by the same rules,” Bright said. “This amendment is an essential part of our larger efforts to bring real and effective fiscal reform to government. There are many steps that must be taken to improve our fiscal health, but balancing the budget on a yearly basis is the only way to ensure that we don’t repeat the mistakes of the past that have created our current situation. Passing a Constitutional amendment is a long process, but it is absolutely necessary to ensure America remains strong for generations.”

“Talking about paying down the debt and balancing the budget is easy. It’s where the rubber meets the road that Congress has fallen short,” said Representative Jim Matheson (D-UT), Blue Dog Co-Chair for Communications. “American families have to live on a budget. The federal government should be held to the same commonsense standard. This is why the Blue Dogs, as part of the *Blue Dog Blueprint for Fiscal Reform*, are calling for a Constitutional amendment that would require that the federal government balance the budget by 2020.”

Specifically, the Blue Dog “Balanced Budget Amendment” would:

- Require Congress to produce a balanced budget every fiscal year.
- Require the President to submit a balanced budget in his or her annual transmission to Congress.

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- Prohibit outlays for a fiscal year from exceeding total receipts for that fiscal year unless Congress, by a three-fifths roll call vote of each House, authorizes a specific excess of outlays over receipts.
- Provide seven years for three-fourths of the states to ratify the constitutional amendment.

Balancing the budget is an attainable goal. From 1998-2001, our country achieved balanced budgets through adherence to PAYGO, limits on discretionary spending, sensible tax policies and investments in smart, pro-growth policies. Forty-nine states currently require an annual balanced budget, and an amendment to the Constitution will finally hold the federal government to the same, commonsense standard.

The fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition was formed in 1995 with the goal of representing the center of the House of Representatives and appealing to the mainstream values of the American public. The Blue Dogs are dedicated to a core set of beliefs that transcend partisan politics, including a deep commitment to the financial stability and national security of the United States. Currently there are 54 members of the Blue Dog Coalition. For more information, visit the Blue Dog Website at <http://www.house.gov/melancon/BlueDogs/>.

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